

Women Around The Messenger

نساء حول الرسول (ﷺ)

Muhammad 'Ali Qutb

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Âminah bint Wahb

The womb of Âminah bint Wahb was certainly the noblest and the most honourable of all wombs.³ It was in this womb that the noble foetus (of Allah's Messenger) settled. This seed had been passed from the loins of men, generation after generation, until Allah in His Divine wisdom decreed that it be passed to 'Abdullâh ibn 'Abdul-Muttalib, the youthful Qurayshi who excelled his contemporaries in greatness and beauty and in whose eyes the light of prophethood was shining. It was 'Abdullâh, who was ransomed from slaughtering, after his father had vowed to sacrifice him and had sought to fulfil his vow. He was the most precious person the Arabs had ever known.

This event took place so that the Divine choice might be actualised and firmly rooted in the history of humankind, bearing witness to Allah's absolute Will. There is no change in His Words, and there is no one who can prevent for what He has decreed.

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ آدَمَ وَنُوحًا وَآلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَآلَ عِمْرَانَ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ﴾
﴿ذُرِّيَّتَهُ مِنْ بَعْضِ اللَّهِ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٣٣-٣٤)

Allah chose Adam, Nooh [Noah], the family of Ibrâheem [Abraham] and the family of 'Imrân above humankind and jinn. They

³ We say this because it was the womb that carried the seal of all the prophets and the leader of the messengers. This does not, however, mean that we do not believe that Maryam bint 'Imrân (Jesus' mother) was chosen over all other women of her time.

were descendants one of another. Allah is the All-Hearer, All-Knower.﴾
(*Qur'an* 3: 33-34)

‘Abdullâh went out with his father ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib after he had been ransomed with the sacrifice and he had increased in light. A woman from Bani Asad ibn ‘Abdul ‘Uzza met him beside the Ka‘bah and told him, after she had looked into his face that was illuminated with the light of prophethood, “You will be given the like of the camels that were sacrificed for your ransom if you can cohabit with me now.”

But ‘Abdullâh replied that it was better to die than to commit this unlawful act, and that a noble man preserves his honour and religion.

‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib finally chose Âminah bint Wahb, of the Zuhr clan, as a wife for his son ‘Abdullâh. Âminah was then the best Qurayshi woman in lineage and status.

A fortune-teller from Tibâlah, Fâṭimah bint Murr al-Khath‘amiyah, had also seen ‘Abdullâh. This woman was one of the most beautiful Arab women, and she was chaste. She saw the light of prophethood in the face of ‘Abdullâh. She then offered herself in marriage to him, but he rejected the offer.

The news of a Prophet that would come from the children of Ismâ‘eel (ﷺ) was spreading all over the Arabian peninsula. This news was based on what the people of the Scripture narrated, and on what was recorded in their Torah implicitly and explicitly, as well as on what fortune-tellers and astrologers were saying.

The circumstances that surrounded ‘Abdullâh ibn ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib concerning his early life and youth, his excellent and brilliant upbringing, his chastity, his high moral conduct and the light for which he was known, had made some women and girls wish to

find favour with him, and they vied to become his wife. But as Allah would have it, it was Âminah who became the wife of ‘Abdullâh.

Âminah’s womb was soon to bear the noble foetus of the Prophet; the womb carried out the duty that was meant for it ... and destiny remains in the Hand of Allah, Who disposes of it as He likes.

When Âminah was a few months pregnant, ‘Abdullâh undertook a journey to Syria.⁴ When he was coming back, he fell ill and stayed with his maternal uncles from the tribe of Bani Najjâr in Yathrib, where they nursed him and took care of him.

However, ‘Abdullâh died in that illness, and his young wife was left a widow. Âminah was greatly saddened with the death of her beloved husband, who had stayed with her after their marriage for only a few months. She wept bitterly and grieved deeply.

The separation was painful, and more painful than this was the movement of the foetus in her womb. It had already become an orphan before it was born, and before it could open its eyes. That was the degree of her psychological pain. But she had a consolation: her own self. She was strong and persevering. She also found consolation in ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib, who took care of her and showed her compassion. He would not leave her for a second, unless he had to attend to his private needs.

Her greatest consolation was of course her baby. She never felt any hardship or inconvenience, whether physical or psychological. What she felt was rather the opposite of that. She was comfortable and at ease. She felt as if she were a different person, because she no

⁴ Syria, according to Arabic geographical terminology, is a region consisting of Palestine, Jordan, present day Syria and Lebanon. The city of Gaza, on the Palestinian coast, was one of the major cities that Qurayshi merchants frequented.